

Arbourthorne Primary School

At **Arbourthorne Primary** in Sheffield, where standards on entry are very low and nearly half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, Steve Arbon -Davis, the intervention manager and deputy headteacher, wanted to move away from teaching assistants being used to provide general in-class support. He planned to develop them as highly skilled intervention specialists. Teaching assistants now deliver Talking Partners, Fischer Family Trust Wave 3, Year 3 Literacy Support, Hi Five (for Year 5 children working at Level 2C or below) and Further Literacy Support. A twelve-week Rainbow Reading intervention is used as a 'catch-up' in all year groups in Key Stage 2. Children with the greatest needs have Reading Recovery in Year 1 and 2.

To create space for all this extra help, a well-equipped intervention suite was constructed, comprising three fully-timetabled rooms. After some initial disquiet from class teachers about the reduction in in-class support, all staff are now fully on board as a result of the progress demonstrated by the clear data Steve gathers on pupil outcomes and regularly presents to governors and staff. 'Once teachers saw the impact', he says, 'they now ask for more of what is clearly working.' Teaching assistants can also see the effects of their work from the data and have become very aware of the difference they are making to children's lives. Their work is given high status; Steve does detailed lesson observations of interventions and provides written feedback.

He leads a comprehensive pupil tracking meeting and holds pupil progress meetings with class teachers at which there is an exploration of what more should be done in class to help any child not making good progress, as well as what interventions they might need. The school has worked hard on developing the teaching of phonics, using *Letters and Sounds*, and also on guided reading. Provision is carefully planned on the basis of audited pupil need and the provision map is reviewed termly. Parents are always involved when a child takes part in an intervention; recently 24 parents attended a session run by the teaching assistants, who demonstrated the strategies they would be using and invited parents to drop in at any time to watch and help.

The effect on standards has been dramatic. 94% of the 16 children receiving the Fischer Family Trust Wave 3 intervention in Year 2 achieved Level 2+ at the end of the year, with a similar percentage of 19 Year 1 children on the programme achieving age-related expectations. Almost every child involved in Rainbow Reading at the very least achieved double the normal rate of progress in reading accuracy and comprehension. The three children on the Hi-Five intervention made dramatic progress over a 10 week period, with an average 14 months gain in comprehension age. Four of the six children taking part in Further Literacy Support are now working at National Curriculum Level 3a, which is the desired outcome for the programme.

Key Stage 1 Reading results have gone up from 49% of pupils achieving Level 2C+ and 40% 2B+ two years ago, to 81% and 67% now. Writing results have shown an even bigger jump, from 49% to 84% at Level 2C+ and 27% to 60% 2B+. All this evidence of children's accelerated progress - major improvements in Foundation Stage, Key Stage1 and a growing year on year progression throughout Key Stage2 – played a key part in Ofsted's recent verdict that, despite not yet quite reaching floor targets in Year 6, Arbourthorne is a good school with outstanding features.